814 [745] Republic. In 1935 a Pension Fund for Estonian writers, artists, musicians and actors was established, financed by ten per cent of the total annual Culture Fund budget.[1] The result of these funds was to give a much-needed security to creative workers, for in a small state writers and artists could not well depend on their royalties.

563 With the law of the Culture Autonomy (bills passed in Riigikogu in 1925 and 1931) Estonia established good relations with her minorities. This law has been praised as one of the most successful solutions of the minority problems in the whole world.

000 The situation at the end of Estonian independence gave full evidence to the fact that the young Republic had successfully come out of her childhood diseases and was looking forward to a happy

1 [see cat. 116, pp. 55- - -56- Analyst]

466 Heavy physical labor or work injurious to health was forbidden for women and children. Working conditions were improved with regulations on working conditions and safety.

[445] The Ministry of Social Welfare supervised the observance of all laws[1] through the State Labor Inspectors, who also were on the lookout for possibilities of further improvements.

745 Social insurance was tremendously extended during the years of independence. Victims of on-the-job accidents received free medical care and artificial limbs, if needed, and in the case of disablement, two-thirds of their wages. In case of permanent disablement, a pension was paid, and in the case of death, the family received funeral subsidies and a pension. Work-accident expenses were all paid by the employer. The farm workers were also insured against

1 [See cat. 116, pp. 300-2-302- --Analyst]

745 work accidents by the State (1936).

Sickness insurance, which was also largely extended during independence, was carried out through the Sickness Fund to which the workers contributed one-third, and the employers the rest. Sick workers received medical care either completely or partially free of charge and also two-thirds of their wages.

Civil service and local government employees were insured against sickness, accidents, old age disability and invalidism.

Maternity aid was available to all female workers and government employees, and aid was provided for dependent children of workers and employees.

464 745 Unemployment was almost nonexistent in Estonia. Some 1000-2000 unskilled female workers were unemployed during the winter, and

464 during the depression this number rose to about
[745] 8000. Emergency relief work was organized by the local governments every winter. In the summertime Estonia was in great need of workers for farming and mining, so much so that workers were even imported from Poland for this purpose.

746 In summary, social conditions in Estonia at the end of independence were quite satisfactory and constant improvement was being made. The public conscience was alert to the problems of poverty, disease and unemployment. Each winter public enterprises (balls, concerts, etc.) were arranged, the income of which was given entirely to the needy unemployed. The churches, too, did work in helping the poor and sick.

511 The last World War, and especially the Soviet occupations, have drastically lowered the

2: Anonymous G-4,5 (no date) 1939 RB1 Baltic Countries RB1
Estonians R64

WAGES IN THE BALTIC COUNTRIES

BC 101 FOUR Baltic countries—Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania—are related to one another not only by their geographical location on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea but also by their historical background, for they all belonged to the former Russian Empire. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were merely provinces of that empire, but Finland was an autonomous state, although with considerably restricted autonomy.

BC 161 Of these countries, Finland is the largest in territory and population, having about 3,365,000 inhabitants, while Estonia is the smallest, with about 1,127,000 inhabitants.

BC 105 511 The level of industrial development and relations and of educational standards in the Baltic countries more nearly resembles that of Scandinavian than of any other European group of countries.[1] Also, although wages are lower in the Baltic countries, it is generally agreed that the cost of living is also lower than in the Scandinavian countries.

Wages in Estonia[2]

E 465 ●745 The wage rates as indicated in the following tables represent the wages as received by workers, and include deductions for sickness and accident insurance. For sickness insurance, the deduction is 2 percent of the wages, to which the employer adds 4 percent. For insurance against accident no deduction is made, but 1 percent is contributed to the insurance fund by the employer alone.

AGRICULTURE

E 465 241 The shortage of farm laborers in 1937 affected the wage situation in Estonian agriculture, causing the wages to rise. Thus, for example, the average monthly wages of male farm hands employed on a yearly contract increased from 22.10 krooni [3] in 1936 to 27.20 krooni in 1937, or 23 percent. For females the increase was 22 percent, their average monthly wage rate for 1937 being 19.50 krooni. Farm workers employed on a summer contract were paid the following average monthly wages in 1937: Male laborers, 38.10 krooni, female laborers 27.10 krooni, and herders 19.80 krooni, representing increases of 23 percent, 22 percent, and 19 percent from the corresponding figures for 1936. Table 1 gives the wages for farm laborers in 1937, employed on both yearly and summer contracts, according to age. Averages for workers aged 18 to 50 are also shown by years from 1933 to 1937.

[1] See Monthly Labor Review, November 1938, pp. 1123-1144: Wages and Hours in Scandinavian Countries, 1937-38.

[2] Report of Edward Hunt, clerk of American Consulate at Tallinn.

[3] Kroon (100 senti) in 1936 to 1938—about 27 cents, U. S. currency.